



Executive Column: Well-Being, You Deserve It!

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The mission of Children and Family Services is Safety, Permanency and Well-being of the children in our care and in our communities. Keeping children safe and ensuring they grow up in a permanent family is core to our practice, but their well-being is equally important. Well-being is measured by the extent to which our children or youth are able to realize their potential across five critical domains:

- Educational functioning
- Physical health and development
- Behavioral/emotional functioning
- Social and interpersonal functioning
- Cultural, historical and environmental context



Children and Family Services has an obligation to attend to the well-being of our children and youth in care and we can significantly improve outcomes for children and families by providing effective practices and programs that promote well-being.

While we are often responsible for the care of others, we don't always take the time to take good care of ourselves. For those of us in Human Services (HS), well-being and professional self-care is an essential social work survival tool and is critical to achieving best practices for our clients. The more thoroughly we understand the stressors we face, the better prepared we are to manage them successfully. It is unlikely you'll be much help to your clients if you are stressed, emotionally exhausted, or haven't made the time to take care of yourself. If left unattended to, stress can lead to becoming cynical at work, being dispirited, making mistakes on your caseload, and even a toxic work environment.

So what are some tips for ensuring your own well-being and self-care? Taking care of yourself can be simple, so don't overthink it! I like to start by determining what's on my plate. Make a list of all the demands on your time and energy at work and at home. You can't make changes without knowing where the problems are. Keep it simple – like finding time for yourself each day. Take a walk! Whatever your activity is, it doesn't have to be all day and can be taken in small moments. Self-care is personal to you and can be exercising or even the joys of cooking. Learn to say 'no' more often to those extra demands and learn to delegate – you can't do it all by yourself! Have a transition from work to home. Mine is listening to new music on a relaxing 30 minute drive home to the mountains. Self-care can be creative so don't be afraid to try something new like photography or art. Find something you enjoy and make time to do it. Remember to take care of yourself so you're better able to help others.

*For additional tips on self-care go to www.stress.org www.mindful.org and www.compassionfatigue.ca.

